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VALLEJO WOMAN CONCEALS HER MARRIAGE FOR NEARLY EIGHT YEARS TO STEAL OVER \$53,420 VIA SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that GWENETTE WADE-SMITH, 51, of Vallejo, California, pled guilty today before United States District Judge D. Lowell Jensen to stealing U.S. Social Security Administration funds.

The case was investigated by the U. S. Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who is prosecuting the case, WADE-SMITH admitted this morning that, from May 1999 through February 2007, she unlawfully claimed to be separated from her spouse in order to receive Social Security Administration benefits. As a result of her conduct, WADE-SMITH obtained \$53,420 in Supplemental Security Income (SSI) cash assistance to which she was not entitled. The SSI program offers monetary assistance in the form of a floor of income for qualifying individuals. In May 1999, WADE-SMITH falsely stated on a Social Security Administration SSI application that she lived alone with her son. She falsely denied receipt of money from her husband, and denied possessing resources. Social Security Administration investigators determined, however, that WADE-SMITH possessed and occupied a Vallejo home she acquired with her spouse, and enjoyed marital benefits and community property while she received her SSI benefits. While representing to the Social Security Administration that she was separated from her spouse, she held

herself out in the community as married, obtained medical benefits as a married person, and maintained 3 life insurance policies with her husband as beneficiary.

WADE-SMITH pleaded guilty to one count of lying to federal officials and one count of theft of U.S. Government money. According to the plea agreement filed in the case, WADE-SMITH will make restitution to the United States for her theft of Social Security Administration funds. She is scheduled to be sentenced on January 8, 2008. The maximum penalty she faces is 15 years imprisonment, a three-year term of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$250,000. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

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